THE COMMONWEAL

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs

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IN DEFENSE OF FREEDOM

IN SWIFT succession, the Nazi dictatorship has struck blow after blow at the individuals or the political parties, and the church organizations, both Catholic and Protestant, which obstruct its march toward its goal: the absolute power of National Socialism over all the other forces of the German nation. It is now quite apparent that the ruthless attempt to uproot and to gradually exterminate all participation or influence of the Jews in Germany—even of the considerable body of Christian Jews—is only one item in the program of realizing the totalitarians' state, under which Christianity, either Protestant or Catholic, will be degraded into mere instruments of the triumphant policy of Teutonic race supremacy. That the poison gas of this arrogant and intolerable policy is already creating evil effects outside as well as within Germany becomes every day more apparent. Even in the United States there are ominous signs of fresh attempts to revive, in new forms, the destructive energies of Ku Kluxery. Under these circumstances, the efforts of the National Conference of Jews and Christians to carry its coöperative alliance of Protestants, Jews and Catholics into a wider field are heartily to be welcomed. Through a coast-to-coast series of radio addresses, and the support of a new committee of highly influential civic leaders, this organization is preparing itself to meet the new menace with which all free institutions are threatened by the growth of frenzied racialism and nationalism.

That this great movement, which aims to put into practical effect, on a greater and wider scale than has hitherto been known, the really fundamental principles of religious liberty and equality of status under the laws of the land, of religious groups of all types, is needed even more greatly today than when it was launched should be apparent to all who give any consideration to the crisis which now confronts our nation and the world. For there is even a greater purpose to be carried out through this organization, and through similar coöperative groups which bring together people of different religious beliefs in common undertakings for the general benefit of the public, than merely dealing with religious and racial difficulties and problems as such. For it is hardly necessary to repeat what is now well known to all, namely that

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the world is face to face with a crisis deeper, perhaps more difficult to deal with, and certainly greater in its extent, than any similar epoch of change and social transformation known to history.

For not only is the world threatened with a renewal of the great disaster of widespread war, and not only are the war fires actually blazing in many parts of the earth, and threatening to spread even wider, but, as we all most tragically are aware, even if we avert the final disaster of war, the equilibrium of society, the institutions and social systems upon which society has reposed for many generations are now visibly tottering, or threatened with change. We do not mean to say that all the changes proposed are necessarily wrong, but in the confusion of the world today, amid the clamor of voices which stress now this plan as the way to social salvation, and now some plan diametrically different, it is hard indeed—in fact, it is next to impossible—for the average man and woman to know what plan to put faith in, or what leader to follow.

One fundamental fact, however, should be plain to all religious people, no matter what particular form of belief they may follow—and that is that there is a great revival of the forces of religion itself and the fundamental principles of morality and religion which for two thousand years have been the guiding stars of all real Christians, and which even before the advent of Christianity had been written by Providence in the hearts of the pre-Christian peoples, obscured and often bent awry as these natural laws of conscience may have been by the contrary beliefs of the pagan period.

It is high time for this revival of religion, and for the practical application of its principles in our social and political life. For it is obvious that for a long time past, practically during the entire course of the industrial revolution which began with the introduction of machinery more than a hundred years ago, there was a great divorce between the principles of religion and the actual conduct of public and business life. There have been and there still are today thousands of political and business and social leaders, both men and women, who seem to live a double life, so to speak. In their capacity as private individuals, with their own families and their friends and associates, they are men and women of spotless integrity. Their word is as good as a bond. Their own lives are moral. In many instances they are churchmen, sometimes even leaders in their churches. They are generous in their private benefactions; they are supporters of education, of culture; and they are patriotic in their devotion to their various nations. Yet, in so many instances, there is a tragic difference when we turn to their public, their political or their business conduct. For there we often find them tolerating, or even conniving at, things which as individuals they condemn. Aware of gross corruption or nefarious practices within their own political party, for example, they will shut their eyes to it; and on the specious plea that "politics are politics and you can do nothing to change the fact," they will ignore their own personal responsibility and permit the corruption to go on.

There is even a deeper division than this between the principles of religion and the conduct of public affairs in general. And that is the growth of excessive pride as expressed in ultra-nationalism, and the swollen greed which accompanies excessive nationalism, so that the governments, even of nations nominally Christian, or which at any rate have inherited the traditions of Christian civilization, will act toward each other in underhanded and often sinister ways, which on a grand scale are similar to the activities of gangsters and racketeers. Religion has been largely excluded from real participation in the actual conduct of such governments. The whole social structure has been infected by this separation of religious principles from public affairs. Even our educational system has suffered deeply from this cause. The keeping of religion for mere Sunday exercise, so to speak, and forgetting or ignoring or putting it to one side during the rest of the week is probably more responsible for the world crisis than any material fact—whether economic causes, racial or national jealousies, or any other reason. For religion lies at the root of all things. It is a fundamental fact. It colors and influences, even by its absence, so to speak, not only the private conduct of individuals, but their corporate behavior in their communities, in their business affairs, in their professional offices, in their schools and universities, and in the council chambers of the government.

When this indifference to and practical banishing of fundamental religious principles is also accompanied by intolerance and bigotry, of course the situation becomes even worse. Germany today offers a tragic spectacle of intolerance and racial and religious hatred inflamed by deliberate propaganda, and expressing itself in ways which have shocked what is left of the democratic and religious principles of the civilized world. We cannot dwell on that sad aspect of the case at present, for space is lacking; but it gives point and cogency to the work of the National Conference of Jews and Christians, and of similar organizations to try to keep the United States as that sanctuary of liberty, as that home of the democratic principle of the right of all human beings to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness which the forefathers intended, and which should be preserved not only for our own sakes, but for the encouragement and the possible strengthening of our neighbors in other lands.

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WEEK BY WEEK

Mysteries of Money

WHILE the greater number of the representatives of the sixty-seven nations foregathered at London mark time, the delegates of the United States, Great Britain and France are locked in a triangular struggle, on the outcome of which depends the fate of the Economic Conference. Reinforced by the support of Holland, Italy, Belgium and Switzerland, the countries still adhering to the gold standard, France is striving to persuade the other two participants in the arena of the central debate of the conference that "monetary stabilization is at the basis of all the questions before the conference." The general agreements between the great powers which should have been reached before ever the conference was convened are now in process of being forged, hastily and belatedly, while hundreds of newspaper correspondents stand by and watch the sparks fly from the verbal anvils, and try to interpret these omens as variously as the sixty-seven varieties of national interests which they try (as the delegates themselves do) to serve and promote. Walter Lippmann is only one of many serious students of world affairs who confesses to inability to grapple adequately with the mysteries of monetary problems. Apparently the modern world has created a Frankenstein monster in its intricate and now unworkable monetary system. "To the average delegate here the subject might as well be relativity or mathematical logic," writes Mr. Lippmann from London. However, it may be taken for granted that somehow, at some time this summer, some sort of formula will be agreed upon at London by means of which the conference will try—and fervently hope—to save itself from utter failure. Meanwhile, however, due to the power of mass opinion in nation after nation, the entire value of the world conference, as it relates at least to international compacts, is being questioned by the growth of the demand for "national self-sufficiency," or "economic nationalism." Before the world can be saved, each nation must save itself. This seems to be the dominant motive of the revival of this form of the nationalistic spirit. At present, it looks as if this is the road which all nations will literally be obliged to travel.

Cardinal Mundelein Speaks

THE CATHOLIC PRESS ASSOCIATION, which met recently for a three-day conference in Chicago, had the privilege of being addressed personally by Cardinal Mundelein at the beautiful St. Mary of the Lakes Seminary. It may be recalled that the Cardinal was himself a newspaper man in the early days of the Brooklyn *Tablet,* so he spoke with feeling to the Catholic journalists gathered before him. It is reported that he had refused to speak to some thirty other conventions gathered in Chicago, but accepted the invitation of the Catholic Press Association for reasons which he gave as follows: "I consider the Catholic press as a distinct department of the Church. It has a twofold connection in this regard. It belongs to the teaching body of the Church and, in its capacity of affording the one avenue of publicity, it belongs to the military section of the Church; it is our Council of Defense. And, like all other departments of the Church, it leads a hand-to-mouth existence." The Cardinal added later in his address, "In the days of our fathers the Catholic press was largely controversive in tone. The non-Catholics then had doctrinal tenets to which they clung and for which they would fight. Now, however, indifferentism is widespread. There is not a little negation and there is not a little unbelief. Poison is fed today to our people in more insidious ways. It is up to you to counteract that. The way to fight that is to build up resistance as the physician does by supplying interesting and instructive information in abundance in your columns." These are words, as we have indicated, spoken from experience, and we recognize and hail them as such.

The Institute Reports

WE REGRET that the fine yearly report of the Cardinal Gibbons Institute of Ridge, Maryland, should have reached us too recently to have been noticed in an earlier issue. This foundation, as our readers know, is doing magnificent pioneer work in an important field of Catholic Action as a national community school for colored youth. The school year just ended, one of the most successful of its history, has been marked by the development of both its educational program proper and its extra-academic activities, especially in the two neglected and vital departments of scientific small-scale farming and community health. Farmers' conferences held at intervals throughout the year, presented exhibits and dealt with farm economics in its broadest sense—cattle and poultry culture, gardening, food preparation; and the home utilities were further served by classes of several months' duration in sewing and carpentry. The health program covered the inspection of many hundreds of homes, instruction in sanitation and correct living conditions generally, and the giving of medical and dental treatment to both children and adults. Until recently the institute has been the sole agency working to better the health conditions of the Negroes of southern Maryland; to it alone must go the credit for reducing the death rate among them by more than 5 percent in recent years. Deficits are all but universal now, and the institute's current one—$6,000—is very small in

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comparison with sums incurred by many other places which cannot show anything like the same stirring record of accomplishment. For all of that of course, $6,000 is a real incubus. The Rockefeller Foundation was to shoulder half of it if the institute had succeeded in raising the other half by the first of this month. We trust that the fact that the formal time limit for obtaining the sum has already expired, will not deter any well-wisher reading this from sending his individual check to Ridge. We can think of no work that deserves it more.

Judge Horton's Decision

SOUTHERNERS and Americans all may well be gratified by the keenly reasoned decision of Judge James E. Horton of Alabama setting aside the verdict of guilty in the now notorious case of Haywood Patterson, one of the nine colored boys convicted at Scottsboro of a crime which according to statute made mandatory a sentence of death. Since a reversal of the original conviction by the United States Supreme Court, Patterson was the first of the nine to be given a new trial. Judge Horton's decision therefore would seem to affect all the other defendants, as the basis of his decision was that the unsupported word of the female hobo who was the alleged victim of an attack was insufficient evidence on which to condemn a man, particularly in this case because the other girl who had testified to the attack at the original trial, had recanted and now said that the whole thing was a put-up job. The testimony of the accuser was further weakened by proof of falsehoods in her testimony where corroborative testimony was obtainable, and circumstantial evidence, Judge Horton pointed out, made the uncorroborated testimony of the prosecutrix inherently improbable. These things were fairly obvious even to the casual newspaper reader of the circumstances of this *cause célèbre*. It took a brave man, however, to assume the responsibility of stating these simple facts. Popular prejudices of varying shades had been aroused and radical agitators had not been slow to seize on this occasion to stir up the passions of prejudice. In their midst, Judge Horton's cool and impartial decision will be of major service to the support of law and order synonymous with justice.

Play in Summer

THE MOST constructive measure to be undertaken in a long time on behalf of the children of Greater New York is being campaigned for by the Citizens Summer Playgrounds Committee. It is planned to open between three and four hundred additional playgrounds for the two hottest months of summer, and to pay, out of the fund now being amassed by public contributions, two supervisors per playground to be selected from the city's "white collar" unemployed. There will be additional work provided, to others of the jobless, in the preparation and equipping of the grounds. A certain amount of extra play territory has been allotted during the out-of-door season for a number of years, but the present project bears some real relation to the scope of this vital problem. No one with eyes and an imagination can wonder at the proportion of city children who turn to lawlessness. The wonder is that, denied elbow room, air, natural surroundings, above all any vestige of the outdoors they can regard as their own, so large a proportion of them go straight. They need their own play territory, summer and winter. Meanwhile, this public-spirited attack on the problem is worthy of grateful praise and support from us all.

Youth Sees Opportunity

IT SOMEHOW afforded a new slant on our hard times, to attend the recent conference of the National Catholic Alumni Federation at the Centre Club in New York. While we are not unmindful of the shortage of available jobs at present for the graduates of our colleges and universities, a shortage which has undeniably in more than the average number of cases led to early frustration and painful need, we were given a sense that youth by and large was not defeated and was not lethargic or despairing. Rather there seems to be an alert sense of awareness that times are changing, that now the affairs of men are in a state of flux that conceivably will permit the creation of a social order nearer to the ideal of social justice and that in the shaping of this new order is youth's opportunity. There were men of all ages at the convention, but youth predominated. It is not so hard for us to recall graduates in the times of so-called prosperity who had only a simple, fairly cynical idea of getting a job, each one for himself where he could make the most money. Social consciousness, a sense of social homogeneity, was relatively rare. The possessor of such instincts was considered more or less of a crank. Now poverty has been made so real to so many that there is a determined spirit, we believe, not only to fend for one's own but also to try hard to root out poverty generally. It may be only a passing phase, like war enthusiasm, but it is a present reality that will make itself felt. And the impetus given to Catholic Action by our present Pontiff will lead, we hope, to a sustained effort and effectiveness by Catholics. "A Program of Social Justice based on the Encyclicals 'Rerum Novarum' and 'Quadragesimo Anno,' " was the business of the recent conference. Mr. Richard Dana Skinner will contribute an article on the subject to a forthcoming number of THE COMMONWEAL.

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WATCHING THE NEW DEAL

THE BEWILDERING speed of the putting over of the "new deal," by means of which our governmental and social systems are being transformed, has at last slackened. With the adjournment of Congress, journalistic and other observers are now confusedly trying to recover their breath and compose their minds, and are settling back to attempt to estimate the probable results of the amazing first three months of the Roosevelt administration.

One fact is outstanding. The President's personal prestige, great as it was when he began his work, and immediately enhanced by his classic inaugural address, and by each swift stroke of executive energy by means of which he won victory after victory for his policy, is now the supreme political force. Probably even the most convinced opponents of the administration would confirm this opinion. Nevertheless, a pause pregnant with many changes of opinion, and leading to a new period of drastic criticism, has come in the tremendous outpouring of Washington correspondents.

One thing, however, is certain. There will no longer be that practically unanimous chorus of enthusiastic approval, or admiration, or at least of acquiesence, which in nearly all our public forums, the press, the platform, the radio networks, the pulpits, have accompanied the first period of the "new deal." The Republican party, for instance, has at least partially recovered from its paralysis. Whatever may be thought of the righteousness or consistency of its political tactics in attempting to oppose the President on the pension reform measure—and for the most part the Republic press surely castigated the politicians—the Washington observers seem to be agreed that their action did succeed in bringing the "old guard" (what is left of it), and the "progressive" elements together again, and that the opposition party will enter the legislative arena at the next session ready to fight more vigorously and unitedly than during the special session. It remains to be seen if they will be able to fight more effectively. Moreover, there will probably be far more divisions of opinion, and of political action, among the various and conflicting elements which compose the Democratic representation in Congress than have hitherto been apparent.

As if in psychological anticipation of the problem which public and private criticism of the "new deal" will soon be to the administration, and which will be forming itself and gathering strength during the next few months, there has emerged a proposal which probably has no chance of immediate application, but which, we believe, is a significant sign of a particular danger to which what is left of our democratic liberty of free speech and discussion will be increasingly exposed.

We refer to the startlingly frank attempt on the part of Dr. Thomas H. Briggs, professor of education at Teachers College, Columbia University, to set up a program of propaganda in the schools, directed by the federal government itself, for the purpose of "developing wider national support of the President." His proposal has been placed in the hands of Professor Rexford G. Tugwell of the Department of Economics, who is a member of President Roosevelt's "brain trust," presumably in order to muster effective and prompt action to make the proposal a practical reality. The proposal sets forth, according to the newspaper summaries—"that in times of great economic and sociological changes—as the present—there is definite need of practical leadership by Washington of the nation's schools." This is precisely the same belief which underlies the absolute control of education and the press and other agencies such as the radio, for swaying public opinion, which has been put into effect by absolutist governments in Russia, Germany and, to a large extent, in Spain and other countries where some form of dictatorship exists.

Without at all joining forces with those ultra-conservatives who would deprecate and fight every effort to interfere with the old irresponsible system which is rapidly being superseded by other devices—of which many will probably be worse than the old order of things; and others will promise desirable and greatly needed reforms—THE COMMONWEAL agrees heartily with the sentiments uttered by former Governor Alfred E. Smith, in his remarks accepting the high honor bestowed upon him by Harvard University: "Keep your eye on the Constitution. All this liquid law can be shaped to meet the emergency of the day, it can be twisted to meet what is going to happen next year. But you want to keep your eye on the Constitution. This is the guarantee, this is the safeguard, this is the night watchman of democratic representative government—freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the right of public assembly, and the right to petition the government."

Mr. Smith's words will undoubtedly be kept in mind by many as we enter the next phase of the "new deal"—the phase in which the new legislation will be tested by its actual practice, and the results thereof. The tendency toward centralization, and the manipulation of mass opinion, even in great social emergencies, while a necessary thing is also a highly perilous process. It is to be hoped that the pause which has come in the process of enacting new laws will bring back the faculties of observation and judgment to something like a normal condition; so that frank and fearless criticism will be exercised as freely as emotional agreement with all sorts of experimental legislation has been exercised during the last few months.

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MECHANISM IN THE SADDLE

By ELMER MURPHY

Mr. Murphy is a cogent social commentator. His association with the United States Chamber of Commerce in Washington gives him a realistic grasp of affairs. He questions whether too great faith in any particular social system, whatever its name, may not prompt a slackening of individual responsibility, a feeling that the system per se will work like a dandy little machine for turning out human happiness. Systems at best, he points out, can only direct our multiple human efforts to a common end.—The Editors.

A SHORT time ago, Dr. Thomas S. Baker, president of the Carnegie Institute of Technology, explaining to a German audience some of the characteristics of the American temperament, said: "Just as the American seeks to invent a piece of labor-saving machinery to relieve him of a certain burden, so he likes to set up a bit of governmental machinery to rescue him from his responsibility as a citizen. He has an indefinite feeling that he ought to be able to turn over the management of his political affairs to some agency which will do the job for him while he goes about his business."

The business to be gone about has suffered a noticeable shrinkage, but the characterization still holds good. In the face of the gathering avalanche of legislation the conclusion is inescapable that the hope of redemption by adjustment, rather than by reform, persists. We cling to the notion that the world is all wrong but that we are all right. We regard as the supreme need of the moment not a change of heart but a change of system.

It is not the first time the indifferent artizan has blamed the tools with which he has worked instead of himself. Nor does the accusation lie solely against Americans. Francis Delaisi, the French economist, makes the generalization a little broader. He likens the people of other countries as well as of the United States to the driver of a high-powered automobile who, in a state of inebriety, encountered a telegraph pole and was catapulted into a ditch. He did not attribute his misfortune to his own lapse but forthwith insisted that the automobile was too powerful and demanded that the government place a limitation upon the horse-power of cars offered for sale to the public. The example is on a par with that of the industrialist who insisted that he had come to grief not because of his rashness in borrowing money without warrant but because of the laxity of the banker who made the loan and the defects of the system which made the negotiation of such a loan possible.

We are not unlike the Jews of old who went out to meet the Messiah clothed in fine garments Who was to confound their enemies and place them in the seats of the mighty without any trouble or effort on their part. The American still clings to the belief in the same mechanistic messiah. As the economic machine shattered his fortunes, the political machine can restore them and a wrong world can be made right merely by enacting laws. Spiritual and moral regeneration might do well enough in a secluded sector of human experience but the real business of life is not done by the individual but by the system. He was overwhelmed by catastrophe, not because he had failed to control himself but because he had not properly controlled the circumstances under which he had worked and lived.

We are now engaged, as Owen D. Young suggests, in cutting the epitaph on the wrong tombstone, meaning that we are marking the passing of a régime when we should be marking the passing of destructive prejudices and passions which threaten any régime or system and which are as old as human nature itself. "The whole world," he said "is learning that treaties, constitutions, statutes, ordinances and bonds are good only to the extent that they are made coincident with basic human relationships which have the approval of that sensitive, quick acting and dominant power, the public opinion of the world."

The same idea is reflected in a more practical way in President Roosevelt's radio addresses to the public. Probably no one realizes better than he that efficacy of any system which may be politically devised depends upon the readiness of the public to make it work; which is another way of saying that the hope of regeneration rests with the people themselves and that government is merely an aid to its realization.

In a time of depression individualism goes into eclipse, just as, in a period of progress, it shines effulgently in the reflected light of collective accomplishment. Not long since we took pride in our tall buildings, our huge industrial plants, our swarms of automobiles and endless highways and our colossal stock of gold. If foreign pilgrims came to burn incense at the shrine of American mass production—"rationalization" they called it—the scent was sweet in the nostrils of the least of us.

We paid due deference to Henry Ford as the apostle of the new dispensation. We rejoiced in the magnitude of the United States Steel Corporation, the Empire State Building and American Telephone and Telegraph. We cheered our

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captains of industry but at the same time we were cheering ourselves. America was great because Americans were great. We took pride in the machine and not in what we were doing with it.

The end of our headlong course was the ditch. We denounced the machine. Our faith in those who drove it was sadly shaken. We lost our confidence in individuals and our confidence in individualism vanished almost completely. Whatever shortcomings had brought us to our plight were not our own but the "system's." We did not lay our ills at our own doorstep; we deposited them like foundlings in the lap of a beneficent government.

Our pecuniary difficulties were ascribed not to bad bankers but to bad banking. Our railroads were in difficulty not because of lack of foresight on the part of railroad management—governmental as well as private—but because of the lack of a coördinated transportation system. Our industrial plant was not overexpended because industrialists plunged recklessly into the sea of production but because there was no comprehensive plan to guide them. Our distribution was at fault not because we were extravagant and demanded things we could not well afford but because the system had become too complicated and costly. We were the victims, not the oppressors. We were not paying the piper for the tune to which we danced but were caught in the grip of adverse circumstances over which we had not exercised the proper control.

Little was said about individual mistakes of heart and mind—the eagerness to attain wealth by the short course of speculation instead of the long course of toil and sweat, the readiness to plunge into debt with the fatuous hope of emoluments to come, the willingness to hazard not only our own fortunes but the savings of others and to ignore the responsibilities of trusteeship to reap harvests that had not been sown. When the bull market was at its height I heard more than one captain of industry say that the prices for securities of their corporations were not justified by actual or anticipated income, but few, if any, openly admonished the public not to buy them. The warning would probably have fallen on deaf ears if they had.

Sobriety and thrift, the resolution to pay debts honestly incurred, virtues of an earlier day, were outworn. They belonged to that Victorian era which, for practical purposes, was as dead as the middle ages.

When the collapse came, we changed our gods but our method of worship remained the same. If one machine got us into trouble, another could get us out and keep us out. Our allegiance was transferred from captains of industry to the captains of politics. To the one we paid the same sacrifice as to the other. If the one had projected us into the trough of depression, the other could lift us to the crest of prosperity. By the enactment of a banking bill, the weaknesses of the old system, which the pressure of economic stringency had painfully revealed, could be eliminated. By overhauling the transportation system and appointing a coördinator, the collapse of the railroads could be averted. By passing a securities bill, investments could be made safe. By fixing a minimum wage and limiting hours of labor, the workman could be assured an adequate income for himself and his family and time to enjoy the better things of life. Farmers—good, bad and indifferent—could be protected against misfortune by the enactment of an agricultural bill. Mortgagors could be rescued from the sea of debt regardless of how they came to find themselves in the engulfing waters.

It did not seem to occur to anyone, until recently, that some banks had survived all the economic storms that had come and gone since the founding of the republic, that some securities were sound because of the integrity of those who had issued them, that if some investments turned out badly, there was oftentimes as much cupidity on the part of the lenders as on the part of the borrowers. The predicament in which we found ourselves was not ascribed to our own covetousness and rashness, our lack of integrity and responsibility, to the ordinary sins of commission and omission which are as old as humanity itself. It was the "system." The machine we had devised did not work.

No one can gainsay that the innocent paid the penalty with the guilty. That, too, is not a particularly recent social phenomenon. The number of helpless swept into the vortex through no fault of their own was greater because we are bound more closely together by economic ties than those who have gone before us. But somewhere along the line of collapse the individual was to blame for derelictions which were old long before government and politics, as we know them, were thought of.

Banks failed not because of the defects of the system but primarily because of the defects of bankers. Many farmers could not pay their mortgages because they never should have made them, and the mortgagee should not have loaned them the money. Many industries collapsed because they never should have been started in the face of oversold markets already deluged with goods. The rush to make radio receiving sets, automobiles, electric clocks—and buy them—became a rout, like the stampedes of old which occurred when sections of the public domain were thrown open to settlers. Collectively, we knew that many homestead seekers would be disappointed but each of us hoped to reach the choice acres first. The devil could take the hindmost and, apparently, the devil did.

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Having failed signally and utterly to devise a system which would bolster human weaknesses and overcome the defects of human nature to which reference is made in the decalogue, we set about devising another system to accomplish the same purpose. The industrial or economic system did not work. It made millionaires of a few of us but subjected many to a treadmill existence, although all of us were probably measurably better off than our ancestors, despite the praises of mediaevalism sung by G. K. C. and others. We are now in process of substituting for it a political system the earmark of which is social justice. Some of its more zealous advocates openly proclaim that its first purpose is to make hard the way of the millionaire and afford the rest of us a greater modicum of ease and comfort, whether we deserve it or not. As even systems cannot do without administrators, we are taking the baton of leadership away from the captain of industry and we are turning it over to the captain of politics, trusting he will wield it satisfactorily.

There is no reason to believe that the one is any wiser or more far-seeing than the other. If the one system has brought us to the verge of bankruptcy, the other, as far as we have tried it, has followed the same road. Government has gone to pot no less than private industry. Municipalities have defaulted on their debts. States are paying the price of extravagance and our own federal government is hard put to it to make ends meet. The toll taken by the one system in the form of higher prices and low wages, is taken by the other in the form of burdensome taxes. The history of government ventures into the fields of industry, transportation, distribution and banking is not very stimulating reading for the apostolate of the new faith.

The individual, with his virtues and his vices, his diligence and his sloth, his determination and his diffidence, is still out of the picture. As a matter of fact, he was not very much in it when prosperity was at its height. His "ruggedness," of which so much has been said, was one of those vanishing illusions to which we cling as a form of self-flattery. He was disappearing under industrial collectivism as much as under political collectivism.

Individuals did not erect our gigantic buildings and construct our railroads, nor did they set up our billion-dollar corporations, or pay for them. They were the fruit of the effort of thousands of investors and the work of many hands and minds. The power exercised by most of our captains of industry was not the power of ownership but the power of trusteeship, just as the power of the captains of politics is the power of the ballot. If the public erred in putting too complacently its fortunes in the hands of the one, there is no reason to believe that it will not err just as much in putting them into the keeping of the other. The industrial buccaneer has his counterpart in the political boss.

There is no doubt now that the old system had its defects which need correcting by legislation, but legislation offers no substitute for the individual initiative and responsibility, the personal integrity upon which any successful system depends. Racketeers may still be racketeers though they are organized in a Bible class. The best banking system in the world will not eliminate bad bankers, and good bankers will survive the worst. The most that can be accomplished by legislation is to jail the individual who commits a breach of trust and to define fraudulent transactions, to remind the captain of industry of the responsibilities of his trusteeship. Much has been done to that end in the many laws Congress has enacted, but more than that has been done. Government having failed to use the machinery at its disposal to regulate the price of electric power, has been launched upon a course of power production to accomplish exactly the same purpose. Public or political management has been substituted for private management with scant assurance that in the long run the one will be any more efficient than the other.

It is not necessary to delve very deeply into the implications of the President's messages, to Congress and to the public, to arrive at the conclusion that he is quite aware of the limitations of systems and that he looks to the public, not as a public but as individuals, to give effect to any system that may be devised. The upshot of much of the legislation that has been enacted is that government shall have the authority to compel the individual to observe in larger measure those obligations toward other individuals which grow out of the close economic relationships that bind us together in a crowded world, and to prescribe to some extent standards of conduct which custom demands to fit the new environment which industry has created.

The recognized need is therefore, in other words, not less individualism but more enlightened individualism, which will accept its responsibilities. That, too, is not a new idea. It was expressed in the commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The difficulty is that there are many more ways of disobeying this injunction now than in that simple pastoral existence which prevailed when this memorable injunction was laid upon us.

It is at least reasonably certain that there is no mechanistic way out. Systems are what we make of them. Legislation does not make good citizens. Neither can it pull us out of the morass of depression into which we have wandered. At best, it can only direct our efforts to a common end so that we shall not work at cross-purposes.

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THE CHURCH IN CUBA

By FRANK C. HANIGHEN

SUPPRESSION of constitutional rights, plots, Communistic plans for the overthrow of the social order, assassination and bloody reprisals have become commonplaces in the news from Cuba. While the curve of sugar business steadily descends, these manifestations increase. With the fabric of tradition in such danger, one might feel some satisfaction in noting that the greatest instrument of tradition, the Catholic Church, continues her work, were it not that her own tenure is becoming daily more precarious. In another part of the Caribbean, the Church is threatened by the venomous Jacobinism of Mexican fanatics, by purely political conditions. In Cuba, it is economic conditions which threaten her very existence.

Politics have dealt more kindly with the Church in Cuba than in other Latin American countries. Up to the last decade of the nineteenth century, it enjoyed all the privileges and wealth which went with the power of Spain. It was the state church amply supplied with money by grants from the crown and tithes, supplemented by private donations. But when Teddy Roosevelt and his men rode up San Juan Hill they quite innocently put an end to all this. After the Spanish were driven out and independence was an accomplished fact, the Church and State were separated. According to the customary train of events in such overturns, the Church might have expected worse. Indeed, Cuban radicals agitated for more drastic restrictions; they clamored for confiscation of ecclesiastical property, suppression of church schools, replacement of church marriages by civil ceremonies and all the rest of the program of Latin American anticlericals.

But their American mentors, while insisting on the strict separation of the Church and State, preserved in other allied matters an admirably American attitude toward religious affairs. They defeated the radical program: they made both civil and religious marriage legal; they started secular education but permitted parochial schools; they protected Catholic cemeteries from nationalization; and they blocked all attempts at confiscation of church property. This was the work, first of General Brooke, and then of his successor, the wise and efficient General Leonard Wood.

When political skies cleared under independence, the consequent economic harvest helped the Church over the difficult period which followed the removal of its government support. King Sugar ruled the industry of the island and business prospered. The planters grew wealthy and gave generously to the Church sums which amply made up for its former crown subsidies. But unfortunately this very condition had its defect. The hierarchy, never having learned under Spanish protection to turn to the masses for offerings, came to rely only on the wealthy landed proprietors for financial support.

But the era of prosperity ended with the enactment in the United States of the Fordney and later the Hawley-Smoot tariff acts, which together with rising tariff barriers in other countries brought to virtual ruin the leading industry of the island republic. With the impoverishment of the planters came the inevitable effects of such an economic disaster. Allied industries, stores, shops, banking, investment—all branches of trade—collapsed, and quite naturally the classes upon which the Church depended were unable to fill the collection boxes as formerly.

One of the most distinctive features of this debacle was the failure of the *capillanias*. These were trust funds, in the form of first mortgages bearing the moderate rate of 5 percent interest which were bequeathed to the Church for various purposes, principally for the saying of Masses and prayers for the dead. This was the greatest source of revenue for ecclesiastical budgets and it was inevitable that it should disappear with the failure of securities. Yet the Masses and prayers are said regularly according to the letter and spirit of the bequests, which to the layman may not seem to impose any especial hardship on the clergy, but which in effect adds greatly to the burden of duties which they are carrying under the depression.

Indeed there is a rather instructive analogy between the process of deflation in industry and its accompanying depression in the Church itself. Contributions and *capillanias* cease at the same time as poverty, disease and misery increase. These misfortunes require more attention from the great Christian organization, in sympathy, sacraments and most of all in the common charity —food, shelter and clothing—which the Church has always freely offered to the miserable. In the secular world, relief and social service work with the necessary expenses entailed also rises rapidly with the depression. But there the analogy ends. The government can levy taxes and has a means of compulsion which will bring some revenue. But while the Church needs more priests, more Sisters of Mercy, larger funds for the care of the needy, they have no such certain means to meet the rising costs of their relief work. It is a grave situation.

What has rendered it particularly acute in Cuba, is the aftermath of the terrible hurricane

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which ravaged the western province of Camaguey last year. The $15,000,000 damage which this storm caused brought much loss to the Church. Churches, nunneries and seminaries were destroyed. Dozens of towns have no houses of worship, and the convents which might have helped in the ensuing misery were wiped out. With no funds to provide reconstruction, the diocese has been in a truly pitiable condition.

Bishop Enrique Perez Sedantes of Camaguey has been an especially noble and energetic figure in this badly afflicted scene. He has obtained surprising responses from his impassioned appeals for help; he has let out stores under his cathedral to make money; he has worked indefatigably directing the details of the relief work; he has traveled widely over his diocese. Soup kitchens, makeshift hospitals, temporary shelters—all have been the result of his labors. In one place, he founded a home for veterans of the War for Independence, that war which found the Church in sympathy with the old régime—an evidence that the old antipathies between revolutionaries and the Church have disappeared.

On horseback and on foot he has penetrated into regions where railways and even roads are non-existent; he has slept with the half-clad natives in their thatched huts; and everywhere he has performed the duties of his office. In one place he baptized 400 children, without a single fee to cover the expense of his journey. In one city of 72,000 inhabitants he collected in the month of January the sum of $2.00. Another place, boasting 37,000 people, gave more—$37.00; but the expenses of the trip were $110. Meanwhile he has tried to fill the slender ranks of his aides by establishing a seminary in his own house, teaching and ordaining native Cubans, the priesthood numbering all too few natives.

Lastly he has resorted to a policy which although belated will establish a healthy foundation for the Church. He has encouraged the contributions of the middle and lower classes, on the sound principle that every member of the Church whatever his station should make an offering, be it only a few centavos. Bishop Perez Sedantes is but one example of the uniform courage and wisdom of the Cuban clergy and hierarchy. Other bishops and priests have adopted the same measures and worked just as heroically.

These ecclesiastical efforts have been increased by the alarming political conditions. It is obvious that the Communists thrive on such a situation. With their Marxian logic they have endeavored to impress on the destitute the lesson that the whole system of society including the Church is the cause of their misfortunes, and as usual Communists seem to receive ample funds from mysterious and foreign sources. In spite of the heroic and self-sacrificing efforts of the priests, there is always a substratum of anticlerical feeling in Latin American countries which these agitators can exploit.

Mr. Horatio Rubens, the author of "Cuba: The Story of Liberty" and one of the important supporters of the revolution of 1898, has recently returned from a tour of the island and reports that the conditions in the Church are quite as bad as those during the frontier days in this country. He also warns that Cuba is providing a soil for anticlerical ideas which greatly resembles Mexico. In his opinion it is a fertile field for a concentrated missionary endeavor.

Indeed the question is inevitable—why should Catholics in this country be interested in giving support to missions in the remote spots of the Far East, when at their very doorstep exist conditions which require immediate and intensive work? The lesson of Mexico is obvious. The Church in this country cannot escape the repercussions of its failure, however unmerited, in a neighboring land. It would be not only Christian charity, but also common sense, to take time by the forelock and prevent the collapse of the Church in a republic where the truly tolerant spirit of American diplomacy has provided a political state of mind which will not hinder its reconstruction.

Expectation

I thought I heard his bony footstep
Stop at my door,
His scythe of ringing steel touch gently
My hall-way floor,
As if in doubt about the hour-glass
There in his hand.
Perhaps he'd forgot, and paused a moment
To read the sand.
Not all was spent, a bit remaining,
He walked away;
But slow his step, as if unwilling
To let me stay.
How kind he is! He'll come tomorrow
And beckon me.
And I shall go without a murmur,
So I am free.
For I have always carried burdens
That hurt me sore;
And as the years took toll of living
I carried more.
Now I would stand as in my childhood—
Serene and straight;
And thus approach the endless morrow,
Its open gate.
I do not fear the bony footstep,
The sharp, swift pain.
What cuts off life shall loose the burden,
I'll play again.

FRANCIS CLEMENT KELLEY.

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THE DREISERS

By CARMEL O'NEILL HALEY

MY ACQUAINTANCE with the family which produced that paragon of letters, Theodore Dreiser, dates from a child's friendship with Mary Dreiser's husband. We were constant companions when this knight of the road came to New York. A salesman with genial manners, he interspersed his flood of conversation with, "the finest fellow on top of God's green earth," or "the greatest outrage on top of God's green earth." When he said the latter we accused him of ranting. After a treat of ice cream one day he told me he must meet a train. I hopped along and at the station we met his wife, "Mary," of whose existence we were unaware. She stepped off the train like a big ray of sunshine for, like all the Dreisers, she was big, and particularly noticeable for her smile. Her shining row of white teeth were due, she told me afterward, to a box of salt her mother kept on the washstand, to which the many children had access, when tooth paste was too dear.

Some evenings later we were introduced to Paul Dresser, the stage name of her beloved brother. The German name of "Dreiser" was not appreciated in the little Indiana town they lived in as children and Paul had swapped it with gusto. Paul called at our home. He was an immense man, and the piano bench was amply filled as he played and sang in a sweet, gentle voice, "You're Just a Little Nigger." I hear that the colored folk resent this song and write to the radio stations to have it stopped, but Paul never wished to hurt anyone.

By way of excursion, Paul invited his sister and me to Rockaway Beach. There was plenty of beer for the grown-ups, sandwiches and ice cream for the child that was, and Paul made so many winkings and blinkings, accompanied by grimaces that he constantly set us all laughing. He had an umbrella with a parrot's head on the handle, green laquered, and eyes of yellow glass. I learned with astonishment that he would at times change the parrot head for an alligator or a rooster or even a monkey. He had as many vests as umbrella tops. They were gorgeous; among them was one of silk plaid.

So much has been written about Theodore Dreiser's brother, Paul, and so much left out which in justice and truth should have been told, that I am happy to append a few incidents.

To begin, Paul was the eldest of a large family, born in Terre Haute, Indiana. The second child was "Rome," short for Romarkus, then came Mary, several other children intervened, and then came Theodore, one of the youngest.

Mr. Dreiser, *père,* was the respectable, successful owner of a woolen mill at that time, and their poverty has been accentuated by one who was too young to recall the earlier days. They lived in a pretty, comfortable home suitable to their means, a wonderful mother superintending the well-kept house and garden. Mary recalls a variety of flowers: peonies and asters, and tulips pointed up through the snow along the garden paths.

Mrs. Dreiser was a convert to the Catholic religion, in which her husband was an ardent but stern believer. There was no church when the family moved to Sullivan, and Mr. Dreiser gave the ground and collected enough from the neighboring farmers to build the edifice, contributing his share as well. Even when the family's means had greatly diminished, Mrs. Dreiser always found sufficient funds to invite some country child to stay for the winter in order to give her the opportunity of making her First Communion. On that eventful day the little girl was daintily dressed in white, the garments fashioned by Mrs. Dreiser, assisted by Mary. If there were no alarm clocks in those early days, the mother of this interesting family did not miss them. "The Blessed Mother will awaken me," she said, when it was necessary to be up unusually early, and I learned that the Blessed Mother always remembered.

Paul was sent to St. Meinerts, Kentucky, a preparatory boarding-school, to fit him for Holy Orders. His father wished to give his oldest son to the priesthood. Paul's heart was elsewhere. When the good Fathers left Paul in charge of some smaller boys, he spent his time teaching his pupils monkey-shines, Negro minstrelsy and tricks of various kinds. Finally, one fine day, Paul was missed from the refectory, having joined a troupe of players passing through St. Meinerts.

During one of Paul's earlier school vacations the family were surprised to see him (a lad of sixteen) come riding up to the door driving a team, to which a wagon-load of country produce was attached. He had been employed, at harvest time, to help out a farmer, and on the completion of his work had begged the farmer to pay him in provisions. The family was well supplied with hams and potatoes for that winter. Poor shabby Paul, very fond of finery, a taste he later indulged to the full, was obliged to wait until brother Rome came home and bought him a complete outfit.

The minstrel troupe traveled about various towns of Indiana, finally coming to grief in some small place, leaving Paul stranded and in great

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dejection. After some anxious cogitations, he called on the parish priest and appealed for help. The door was opened by Father Ollardine, and Paul was received with open arms and given shelter and food as well as work; he was kept all winter. Again, as on many previous occasions, his mother's bread cast upon the waters was returned to her children. When Father Ollardine, a poor struggling priest, with scarcely sufficient clothing and no socks for his feet, was traveling from one small town to another to administer the sacraments and say Mass, Mrs. Dreiser both clothed and fed him. She then had a room set apart in which he might celebrate Mass, inviting thereto all the Catholics in the vicinity.

Paul drifted from that little town and joined another company of minstrels, always returning to see his mother and to give what help he could. Eventually he formed a music publishing company with Messrs. Howley and Haviland. These three men were familiar figures on Broadway: Mr. Howley so small, Mr. Haviland very tall, and Paul so stout.

By this time Paul's songs, "On the Banks of the Wabash" and "Just Tell Them That You Saw Me," were famous and he enjoyed prosperity. One kind deed followed another, and they illumine the memory of Paul Dreiser. There was his father whom he supported until he died, his nephew whose benefactor he was, the wife of a man in his employ, shabbily neglected by her husband, whom he supported until she died of consumption; his charities were numberless.

Father Van Rensellaer, a Jesuit priest of St. Francis Xavier's Church, New York, constantly sought his help in giving minstrel shows for his Day Nursery benefits. Father "Van" received all he sought and in turn watched over the soul of his big boy, even seeking him out when Paul wandered too far "Down where the Würzburgher Flows" and neglected his religious duties. One day poor Paul ran to cover behind one of the pianos in Howley, Haviland and Dresser's, where Father "Van" ferreted him out and was only driven away when Paul promised repentance and a visit to the church on the morrow.

While Paul was living with his sister, Em, his health failed. He spent long hours at the organ, and these slack days gave him time to prepare for his "Going Home." Mary, wired for to St. Louis, had hastily boarded the train to New York when a newsboy ran through the cars shouting, "Paul Dresser, noted Indiana song writer is dead!"

Father Van Rensellaer celebrated the Requiem Mass on a First Friday, a special feast for Catholics. He spoke of the Day Nursery which Paul had befriended and concluded by saying, "If he sinned, he always repented. Every First Friday found him here at the altar, and the doors are now opened to him on his last First Friday." Father Van Rensellaer then recited Paul's last song, "Judgment Day Is at Hand."

One day Mary took me to another sister's home in the neighborhood on the upper West Side of New York, near Central Park. By this time I was her constant companion. It was about eleven o'clock on a Sunday morning. In walked the great T. D.—a rather nervous, gawky man and very serious. He had just written "Sister Carrie." His sisters who had read the manuscript thought that he had put in too many details and asked him in a timid way if he did not think so. They were all extremely gentle and soft spoken, loving everything refined.

Theodore was, I believe, living on Second Avenue with his wife "Jug," titian-haired and devoted to him. When he could not sleep and paced the floor, I hear the little wife trotted up and down after him.

The apartment, where we listened to the discussion of the book, was a small "walk-up," as they were called. The kitchen, which was also a dining-room, had a shiny gas stove divided from the rest of the room by a lovely Japanese screen. This was before the days of vanishing kitchens, vanishing beds and vanishing respectability. It was all a real wonder to me.

My next acquaintance with the Dreiser family was on a visit to Mary Dreiser, in Rochester, New York. Her husband was still my kind friend and I spent a few weeks there. It was a lovely home just off Lake Avenue. The house had a wide veranda, a little well-kept lawn in the front and a nice garden in the rear.

There I met Theodore Dreiser's father and his red-headed nephew, Carl. The old gentleman was thin, with white hair and piercing black eyes. He attended to the small garden. There was a three-foot tomato patch near the fence and running along it, which he watered daily. In fact his sense of responsibility was so ever-present that when he recovered consciousness after a long illness, his first words were, "Mary, did you water the tomatoes?"

There was also a lovely bed of pansies in the garden. Mary told me that if you talked to the flowers they understood, were much happier and grew more luxuriant. As we had our little tea party, the pansies, and nasturtiums as well, decorated the table.

Mr. Dreiser, sr., spent much time in his room praying but was always ready to run down stairs at a call, to aid his daughter in any household chores. His son-in-law called him "Pop." A little snap-shot taken at that time, shows him with serious mien, standing holding the handle of the lawn-mower. On returning with him from Mass one Sunday morning, he said, as we strolled under the leafy trees, "Dere is no real faith in dis coun-

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try. On de other side, dere is de real faith." And he shook his head sadly.

Little Theodore was taken to church when about five years of age and told that "God was there." He immediately responded with, "Give me God!" When friends called at the Dreiser home, the little, wise-looking child drew up a small chair and listened to everything with a knowing air.

Some years ago I took a studio in one of the old Rhinelander estate frame-houses, on West 11th Street. It wasn't very far from where the poet Masefield daily cleaned out one of the old-time saloons. The house was set well back from the street, had a friendly wide veranda, and my studio had French windows opening onto it. A full-grown oleander tree spread its branches over the plot of grass in the front and shaded the veranda. The tree always reminded me of the verses of Francis Thompson's:

> Ah! is Thy love indeed
> A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed
> Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?

My oleander permitted scarcely a blade of grass to pierce the sod. It was almost a hairless lawn, seeded frequently but in vain. Mary Dreiser had leased the place, and I, in turn, had subleased a room from her, for there were "many mansions" under the roof and the spreading oleander tree. Wondering what had become of a book I was reading, "En Route" by Huysmanns, Mary told me, "Theo has taken it. It was a book he had always intended to read!" It was a borrowed book at that!

When spring had melted into summer and I was off to the mountains, Mary sublet my studio to Brother Theodore and there he wrote the greater part of "The American Tragedy." There is a photograph of him, statuesquely leaning on my white marble mantlepiece, some of my lares and penates at the great one's elbow.

No one could stretch his imagination to the extent of applying the term "jolly" to Theodore. While Mary was living in a small town in Michigan, there was an undertaker's wife who made the comment that she hoped one of the old men in the village would soon pass on as she needed a new bonnet. When Mary told this story to Theo, expressing horror at the woman's attitude, he said, "Oh! she was only thinking of her new hat!"

Mary was the very antithesis of Theo in cheerful optimism and when he would rebuff some cheery remark of hers, I protested: "If you want to look at things through your smoked glasses and Mary wants to look at the bright side, it's all right for you and it's all right for her!" Mary's strength and tenderness and vision endeared her to all who knew her.

THE MOTHER

By MARIE ZOE MERCIER

THE MOTHER could deal adequately with any of the immediate problems of life, from persuading eloquent *facchini* that their services were not worth the number of *lire* at which they valued them, to securing an entrance into any of the catacombs of Rome and explaining to Callisto, who was the gardener of the Villa, just how the roses should be trimmed. The mother had a gift with flowers. She could touch them to gracefulness even in the stiff vases that went upon the chapel altar, and her presence in the garden was like that of a great lady.

It was in the garden that she taught us much of what we learned from her. We mastered the intricacies of darning heels, on a day when the first October rains had roused the whole field south of the *pinetta* to a new flowering of daisies. We read the last pages of the "Promessi Sposi," on a day when the blooming of the plum trees was heavy on the morning air. We discussed the sublimity of the apostolic tradition, at the end of a day when the city had hung out the papal flag next to the Italian banner for the first time in fifty years. But besides the garden there was the classroom.

All the rooms of the Villa were tall and grey with slender French windows built to keep out the heat of the sun. The classroom had three windows, one of which looked out on the north end of the garden where a row of cypress trees marked it off from the first faint undulations of the Campagna. Lessons we had all over the Villa, up on the terrace roof where the sun was warm, down in the garden along the gravel walks, or in the streets or hidden *piazze* of the city outside whose walls we had chosen to tarry, but the classroom was to remain forever memorable as the seat of after-supper recreation. We played spelling games in three languages; we acted the fables of La Fontaine with an earnestness worthy of Racine; we sat quietly and knitted for the poor while the mother told us stories.

It was evident that the mother made an art of the telling of stories. She had the attendant energy to dignify with a tireless humor the smallest detail in every-day life. There were, to begin with, the stories of the holy founder of the order, little stories of wisdom and sanctity and pointed wit. There were the stories of his first daughters whose deeds would go into the making of a treasured tradition. There was one story about the mother herself who begged the reverend mothers to let her go to prison rather than pay a fine incurred for a light after dark during the German occupation of the town. "I should have enjoyed it so," the mother sighed.

It was only every other week the mother spent with us in the classroom. During the week she spent with the nuns of the community most of the noise would come from their end of the hall, and we would knit on and wonder why life had suddenly grown dull. At any moment during our frequent pilgrimages into the city, did we encounter one of the more or less endearing vagaries of the Latin temperament, the mother would in-

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variably murmur, "I must remember to tell that to the community tonight." One morning, I think it was on the way up the winding road that climbs the Aventine to the traditional haunts of that strange old beggar saint, Alexis, we were meditating aloud on the gaiety of holy company. "They tell us," the mother observed, "that once when Thérèse of the Child Jesus was too ill to come to recreation at the community room one of the younger nuns said, 'Sister Thérèse is not here? Then we do not laugh tonight.'" One might be acquainted with the dauntless courage and shy delicacy for which the Little Flower's life is legend the world over without knowing that in her convent at Lisieux she was loved for laughter.

The mother's admirers were not confined within classroom walls. Cesare and Callisto were hers devotedly forever. If Callisto became worried about the artichokes he would consult the *Madre*. If Cesare was called in to put up a shelf or wrestle with the plumbing he had to confer about technicalities with the *Madre*. Cesare had constituted himself caretaker of the Villa because his cottage squatted just outside the north gate and the spiritual welfare of his four small sons was very much the concern of the *Madre,* not to speak of her admonitions in behalf of the material advisability of occasionally relieving their round faces of the day's accumulation of dust. It was the advent of the fifth son which gave us all an unexpected half holiday to attend the child's baptism in St. Peter's. Dorinna's gait had something of the royal in it as she introduced her fifth to the great Petrine basilica. She was at home in the halls of her father while her son was coming into his own. "To think," the mother whispered when it was all over without a whimper, "to think that this little body is the tabernacle of the Holy Ghost. Ah Dorinna, you are fortunate," and her hands hovered over the child as if she would have taken him.

Galleries and crypts became our chief obsession as the months went by. The mother's interest in faded frescoes was insatiable nor was she content unless we shared it. We rebelled when it came to inscriptions, however. They are tacked, so it seems, up and down all the walls of Rome, and we preferred the Sistine Chapel. On the way to the gallery of the *Braccia Nuovo* of the Vatican there is a long hall of inscriptions with all the little doves and palms and unreadable script that one might wish. Eagerly we would pass it by, avid for more immediate pleasures, but the mother would pause a minute to look down its silent lengths and give a little sigh perhaps that only those stony witnesses of valiant days could overhear.

The mother was never one to romanticize, nor did she approve of that indulgence in others. A woman who has fashioned herself with the high hand of unremitting self-discipline is not betrayed by imagination, but sometimes it is given to seventeen to see visions. Thursday was bath day at the Villa and brought with it a half holiday to be devoted to the purpose. Italian plumbing and a precarious heater in the kitchen proving inadequate for our requirements, the mother would don the blue apron and supplement with buckets. It was an extremely ordinary apron, and yet, so attired, there was something about her reminded us of the Blessed Mother of God.

COMMUNICATIONS

THE STRANGEST CZAR

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: After the nice remark of Mr. Cuthbert Wright's about my book reviews, I feel it is most ungrateful on my part to attempt to contradict some of the things he writes in regard to my review of "Ivan the Terrible," which appeared recently in your columns. But I think he did not quite understand what I meant when I wrote the phrase to which he takes exception about the cruelties of the Valois kings in France. What I intended to bring out was that cruelty was typical of the times in which Ivan the Terrible lived, which assertion of mine no student of history will deny. Of course the horrors which Ivan committed could not have been equaled anywhere else, because Russia in the sixteenth century was still an absolutely savage land, and because the Russian is cruel by nature, as the recent Bolshevik Revolution has shown. But in other countries also, terrible deeds took place at that time, such as the persecutions of the Catholics under Elizabeth in England, and those of the Protestants during the reign of her sister, Mary Tudor. In the Netherlands also, under the Duke of Alba, there were revolting acts of cruelty.

As for the Valois kings, they were not quite the saints Mr. Cuthbert Wright tries to make them. And Mr. D. B. Wyndham Lewis in his vindication of Louis XI has not been sufficiently convincing. In regard to Francis I, his kind-heartedness is very problematical, and certainly his conduct in regard to Diane de Poitier's father, the Sire de St. Vallier, was anything but kind or gentle. Henry II persecuted the Huguenots with a relentlessness that nothing can justify, and the condemnation and execution of Anne Dubourg, for instance, who was burned alive for having dared to plead the cause of his co-religionaries before the King, is one of the dark deeds of the Valois dynasty. Francis II, although moved to tears when he was compelled by his mother and the Guise family, to witness the execution of the conspirators of Amboise, did not attempt to save their lives, which he might have done. Charles IX, far from having had his hand forced at the time of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, took particular pleasure in firing from the windows of his apartment in the Louvre, on the unfortunate Huguenots who were trying to escape from the pursuing assassins. Before that he had arranged the murder of the Admiral de Coligny, in the most treacherous manner possible. As for the last of the Valois, Henry III, his sadism is a matter of history, and I would advise Mr. Cuthbert Wright to consult on the subject the State Archives in Cracow and Warsaw, where he will find more proofs than he needs of the degenerate instincts of the last of the Valois kings. Surely Mr. Cuthbert Wright will admit the curious part his "Mignons" played in his life. And furthermore, the cunning with which the murder of the Duke de Guise was planned at Blois makes it one of the most cruel deeds recorded in history—one that can only be compared to the assassination of Bussy d'Amboise by Henry III's brother, the Duke d'Alencon.

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The Valois were cruel, only in a more civilized way than Ivan the Terrible, though in consideration of the fact that everybody was cruel at that time, they cannot be judged by present-day opinion. But history remains history, and it is useless to try to whitewash deeds which are cold-blooded crimes, no matter where they happened, or by whom they were perpetrated.

CATHERINE RADZIWILL.

IMMIGRATION

New Haven, Conn.

TO the Editor: It is disappointing at this late date to find the American immigration policy so completely misrepresented as in the paper by Mr. Pell in your issue of May 26. Errors of interpretation may be debatable; gross errors of fact are not. I cite his statement that the present law provides " . . . that a certain number of immigrants shall be admitted to the United States in the proportion . . . believe[d] to have been the proportion prior to the Revolution." It is plainly inexplicable that a man who was "a member of Congress when the first Johnson bill was introduced" should be ignorant of the present law, which reads: " . . . The annual quota of any nationality . . . shall be the number which bears the same ratio to 150,000 as the number of individuals of continental United States in 1920, having that national origin, bears to the number of inhabitants of continental United States in 1920."

Your well-wishers will find it especially unfortunate, of course, that such an error should appear in a magazine of THE COMMONWEAL'S excellence and authority, and in a paper whose gravely provocative thesis places the author under rather extraordinary obligations to accuracy.

C. P. IVES, 2d.

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TO the Editor: Recent communications in THE COMMONWEAL regarding Catholic libraries have interested me.

I opened a Catholic circulating library here in 1931. Use of the library was free to nuns and priests. The regular rental charge was $.03 per day. The library was a distinct failure. Not even the local priests would read the books, nor would they read THE COMMONWEAL which was always on hand at no charge whatever. The only people, with one or two exceptions, who read the books were a few of our intelligent Protestants.

At the present time I am operating a profitable rental library but not as far as Catholic books are concerned. I fear too many Catholic college graduates confine their mode of education to the classroom. If the reading Catholic public wanted Catholic books, undoubtedly their libraries would supply them. The main fault is lack of demand.

EDWARD THOMAS O'BRIEN.

The title page and index of Volume XVII of The Commonweal are now ready. These will be sent upon request.

THE SCREEN

By RICHARD DANA SKINNER

Richard Tauber on the Screen

MORE than passing interest attaches to the recent release in this country of a German film in which Richard Tauber, the famous German tenor, takes the leading part. There are many who will see in it faint resemblances to the picture of two seasons ago which featured John McCormack. But these resemblances are only superficial. The Tauber film, of which the English title is "The Golden Goal," serves the double purpose of indicating a trend and of demonstrating what expert technique can do in making a very simple story absorbingly human.

In the matter of trend, it is perhaps enough to say that we are on the road back toward decency and simplicity. The story of "The Golden Goal" is simply that of a young Bavarian innkeeper whose voice attracts the attention of a prominent Berlin concert manager. He is taken to Berlin where his voice is carefully trained and where he makes a highly successful début at the opera. His success, however, marks the parting of the ways between his old life and a new one in which, as an artist of international fame, he must pursue a lonely road. Circumstances somewhat beyond his control separate him from the young girl he had intended to marry and he returns to his native village just at the time of her marriage to another life-long friend. The film closes with the young tenor creeping in at the side of the church. He decides to pay his tribute to the past by singing with the choir. It is a very dramatic moment when his voice, rising thrillingly above all the others, lets the girl at the altar know that he has come back—too late.

The more important aspect is the technique which the German directors develop for lending dramatic strength and human quality to so simple a story. I have often remarked in these columns on the difficulty of writing a successful play or story around an artist of the theatre or opera. In nine cases out of ten the author makes a great effort to display the unusual and temperamental qualities of his hero or heroine and to base the action of the play upon those peculiar qualities. This is usually fatal to the universal interest of the story, since the emotions and the temperament of the artist are rather beyond the understanding of the average audience. It will be noticed that in the present story no effort is made to do anything more than tell the simple love story of two human beings and its frustration through circumstances. It is not any quirk of temperament which separates Toni Lechner from his village fiancée. It is the perfectly understandable matter of time, distance and preoccupation with his work. There is also the jealous action of the young woman who sings the leading rôle at the opera. She prevents his receiving a note which is sent to him back-stage by his fiancée at his début performance. All of these things are quite understandable in human terms without any resort to fine-spun ideas of artistic temperament.

But it is not only in the building of the story that the

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Germans are peculiarly successful in this film. In a hundred important details they cling to a realism and an integrity of scene which our careless producers at Hollywood are apt to overlook. The film opens at a high Mass in a country church with Toni Lechner singing in the choir. Now the important thing is that the few details of the Mass shown in the picture are correct, even to the intoning of the "Ite Missa Est" by the priest. In the following scenes in the village inn, of which Toni is the proprietor, minute attention is paid to a dozen homely details which carry complete conviction. There is an entire absence of formal stage effects. The very casualness of the atmosphere makes it credible and ingratiating.

The unexpected intrusion of the Berlin concert manager and his group of friends, due to an automobile accident, brings no change in the routine of the inn. It is quite accidental that Toni joins in with the musicians in singing a popular song. Then, when he is requested by the concert manager to sing alone, he does so not only very simply but with a very natural crudeness which entirely fits the notion of an untrained voice. It is only a real artist of Mr. Tauber's caliber who could manage to mark so accurately the difference between the method of a trained and an untrained singer. There is the same quality of voice but with a lack of the finer phrasing and modulation which one would expect under the circumstances. Later on, Mr. Tauber fully makes up for this self-sacrifice when, as the successful artist of the opera, he has three or four chances to give full rein to his exceptional artistry.

It is a rather interesting point that throughout the entire film, music is brought in at almost every point, yet never obstrusively. There is always a simple and logical excuse for it, whether it be a phonograph played in the compartment of a train, or a small orchestra at an after-the-opera reception, or the rehearsal of an artist playing his own accompaniments at the piano. Through these various devices the film manages to enhance its romantic appeal without apparent effort.

The Germans, of course, have been famous for years for their skill in photography. I have rarely seen a German film, however, which surpassed in integrity the scene of Toni Lechner's début at the opera. There is a notable absence of exaggeration at every point. Yet the gradually mounting interest and approval of the audience is notable, subtly but clearly, during the course of Toni's singing. You see the groups back-stage, the orchestra boxes, the singers, and occasionally the entire house as viewed from the stage itself. Yet the transitions are so skillfully blended as never to bring the least break in continuity. Each short flash simply enhances the effect of the preceding ones and leads insensibly to the effect of climax.

The picture, as a whole, is marked by a keen sense of dramatic restraint and by a simplicity and integrity far exceeding anything I have seen on the screen in many long months. Mr. Tauber's splendid voice is well recorded, so that those who have not had the chance to hear him in concert may gain a clear idea of his exceptional artistry. (At the Vanderbilt Theatre.)

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BOOKS

Psychology of the Blind

The Blind in School and Society, A Psychological Study, by Thomas D. Cutsforth. New York: D. Appleton and Company. $2.50.

THIS work is written by a man who himself has been blind from the age of eleven and who therefore with a background of visual memories had his adolescence and adult experience in blindness. What he brings out strikingly is that the blind are not just a group of persons rendered similar by a common affliction, but they have all the individuality to be found among those who see and at the same time have some added personal problems of their own because of their sightless condition. Dr. Cutsforth is quite sure that it is a mistake to try to treat blind children as if they were seeing persons, for there are very distinct differences. He emphasizes particularly that a great many blind pupils are haunted constantly by the feeling that they are being watched and made the subject of observation. This feeling persists with them even in the privacy of their own rooms when they are alone. Alumni of schools for the blind report that this phobia of being watched persists years after they have left the institute. Great care has to be exercised by those in intimate contact with the blind not to heighten this phobia or it may become an obsession.

A series of chapters is devoted to "Problems in the Emotional Life of the Blind," including one on "The Sex Behavior of the Blind." Dr. Cutsforth emphasizes the fact that human beings are much more highly sexual than any other animals and therefore it might be expected that the blind would share in this. Man's sex tendencies are expanded by the fact that the mating season includes the entire year rather than a seasonal burst of activity. It has been suggested that Freudian sublimation may be of great service in helping the blind over some of their sex difficulties, as it is supposed to have done at least in the case of seeing people. Dr. Cutsforth is definitely of the opinion, however, that this is a mistake: "Although this Freudian mechanism has been a dominant note in psychotherapy this past generation, it is being discarded in many quarters along with the laying on of hands and the use of amulets." He suggests that "sublimation is as impossible and as far from reality as it would be to thrust a newly hatched chick back into the shell and have it emerge a rabbit." He is convinced that "the principle of sublimation does nothing but dwarf and distort the personality."

There are chapters on "The Fantasy Life of the Blind," "The Aesthetic Life of the Blind," on "Personality Problems and Social Adjustments in Institutions for the Blind," so that the book is full of suggestions for those who are particularly interested in the care of the blind. The author insists that the aesthetic life of the blind has suffered much from the educational methods and ideals now in use which partake too much of methods best calculated for the education of seeing pupils.

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(Nevertheless) A Poet

No Retreat, by Horace Gregory. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $1.50.

DIFFERENTIATED from the craftsman, the versifier, the professional obscurantist, the huckster of penny fancies and the innovator of a celebrity as brief as fireworks, Horace Gregory is a poet, and among his contemporaries a significant one. One has the right to expect much of him, for his present collection is full of flaws, uncertainties, vulgarities, yet contains passages, almost whole poems, possessed of that repose that is the true work of art. Severity of criticism is due certain lines, ideas, images, poems in this collection; the greatest praise is due others. There is much that is dross: ineptitudes, an adolescent irony; indecipherable scrawls, obscurities and elliptical passages; lapses into execrable taste. There are lines that create images possessed of a spatial dignity, others that remain mere clutters of words on the page (such as "Cassandra, the world's on fire, the harvest's sour" or "Blind as a statue with its name forgotten"). Connotive rather than precise, certain of his lines have a certain remote and enigmatic quality. In them, the precise meaning of the words is secondary: the emotions they arouse have always an overtone that is not definable, not immediately communicable. Such lines inhabit the mind at a distance, apart: they find company only with lines of Coleridge, figures of the Siamese dance, Picasso's "Woman with a Fan":

> "Is that a storm in the sky?
> And are these apples ripe? I grew this orchard
> to be a paradise
> this side of Eden."

In his book, there are many images imperfectly articulated, thoughts left in midair; he has even permitted himself to use one figure of speech as the basis for another, as in:

> "piercing the sunset's terminal where day
> breaks midnight into stars before the dawn"

in which the "baggage smasher" of popular superstition is alluded to in one of the most tenuous figures one can readily recall.

It is apparent that Mr. Gregory's writing is undergoing a period of change. Through comparison of this new collection with the previous "Chelsea Rooming House" there become apparent changes in the bent of thought, of attitude, of emotion: from the specific, the definite, the concrete, the subject of consideration has become, tentatively and with many retreats and excursions, the abstract, the impersonal, the ceremonial and timeless. In this, he is related to certain of his contemporaries. It is perhaps this similarity of impulse which accounts for certain similarities that exist between the properties—symbols, images, technical resources—of these contemporaries and those of Mr. Gregory. Like Donne, he can be accused of borrowing, but, like Donne, he has

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borrowed only what is rightly his—by temperament. What he contributes to a fund for borrower is greater than what he has appropriated from another fund: his originality is not seriously to be disputed. His greatest faults are those of opacity and the lapses from a strict fastidiousness he permits himself. The confusion which is his is less a personal fault than an affliction of his times.

RAYMOND LARSSON.

Sherwood Anderson Returns

Death in the Woods and Other Stories, by Sherwood Anderson. New York: Liveright. $2.00.

IT WAS time that Sherwood Anderson gave us another volume of short stories. His novels and essays since 1924 have not spoken for small towns and race-tracks and "unused lives" so unmistakably as his three books of short stories published before that time.

Occasionally in "Death in the Woods" he speaks that way again: in the title-story an old woman dies while circling dogs wait to devour her; in "Brother Death" a tree is cut down and a boy anticipates death; in "A Jury Case" one Virginia moonshiner shoots another. The first two of these combine that wonderful sympathy of his with the life-giving he always finds in death and unrealized love, the third has the bitter cruelty of mountaineers. These stories compare with some of the lesser ones in "Winesburg," "The Triumph of the Egg" and "Horses and Men."

But the others fail. Anderson is not attached to the apartment-dwellers of the Bronx, to English novelists, to college professors, or to sophisticates in Paris; and he simply cannot write feelingly of people when he does not care for them. He cannot do justice even to mountaineers when he becomes self-conscious about his story-telling; he cannot deal with hate; he cannot do much with his own recent experience. For a successful short-story he must look back to boyhood and its people, or to some similar life where he can find them both again.

And he has sought them everywhere in the last few years: in New Orleans, in the subconscious, in Paris, in New York again and again, in a newspaper editorship in Virginia, in the industrial towns of the South, in the machine, in Communism: always with increasing rootlessness.

It may be that in all this he was merely typifying America and her many lost artists. But where, then, was the poet of the early stories; the fearless truth-seeker of "A Story-Teller's Story"; the novelist of the occasional passages and significant themes?

We remember a man who purified the very words of our speech, the grey simple every-day words we did not even know before he came; who, many times, through tears, told us that the life of business was a lie, and that man has other purposes here; who made us live as we never had before. We need this man now—we shall always need him. Will he go on from the best in "Death in the Woods"?

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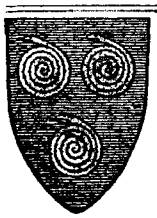
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Briefer Mention

Wilderness Walls, by Jane Rolyat. E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.35.

"WILDERNESS WALLS" is a curiously uneven novel. Its subtitle tells us that it is the story of a young man—and the wilderness. The author writes an incisive prose, admirable in its descriptive power, and convincingly portrays the atmosphere of a Hudson Bay Company Post in the 1860's. The theme of the book, however, is not developed clearly. As a character study, it is too blurred, with melodramatic incidents out of place. The hero's love for Camille is not well enough portrayed to be a motivating force in his decision to stay in the wilderness, and hence the conclusion is not sufficiently climactic. The book, however, gives an interesting picture of a locale and time not often found in fiction.

Time to Live, by Gove Hambidge. New York: Whittlesey House. $1.50.

THIS little book quietly attempts a difficult thing, to refresh appreciation for the simple, homely and priceless things, as leisure is priceless. The author writes gracefully of the satisfactions of making one's own home with one's own hands, of gardening, archery, pottery-making, reading good books and eating healthy foods, and so on. This provides pleasant, discursive reading for anyone with an inclination for the simple life, though this life in fact may be suspect of being never quite as thrilling as it is imagined in the writer's closet or a reader's easy chair. Stevenson's essay on Thoreau might be suggested as an antidote.

Delphiniums: Their History and Cultivation, by George A. Phillips. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

IT MUST be conceded that the delphinium is a great if somewhat difficult beauty, for the number of pests and diseases to which she is subject baffles computation. On how to preserve the delphinium's health Mr. Phillips is excellent. His advice combines simplicity with sense. The volume contains in addition an engrossing presentation of the evidence in favor of this flower and a fine analysis of the modern varieties. It looks to us like easily the best work on the subject.

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